United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council says it is satisfied with pace of Mozambican peace process; expresses cautious optimism on prospects for democracy, peace and representative government after October elections.

+ Secretary-General, in Islamabad, has talks with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan; asks Special Envoy for Tajikistan to meet with Tajik opposition leaders in Tehran to obtain agreement on cease-fire accord.

+ Secretary-General expresses grave concern at continuing fighting in Afghanistan; appeals for halt to shelling of civilians in Kabul on humanitarian grounds; asks Special Envoy to convene broad-based meeting with view to breaking deadlock in peace process.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights appoints William Clarence to head human rights field operation in Rwanda.

+ Secretary-General of Population Conference says there is no reason why goals in draft programme of action should not be achieved.

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The Security Council today said it was satisfied, at present, with the pace of the peace process in Mozambique, including the demobilization of forces which would be completed shortly. In a statement read out by its President, Juan Antonio Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain), the Council expressed cautious optimism that Mozambicans would achieve democracy, lasting peace and responsible representative government in their country.

The Council welcomed the fact that the main Mozambican political parties and the National Elections Commission had confirmed their commitment to the holding of elections on 27 and 28 October, as scheduled. It reiterated its intention to endorse the results provided that the elections were free and fair, and reminded all parties of their obligation to respect them, as well as the principles of democracy. It encouraged the parties to continue efforts to ensure post-electoral harmony on the basis of the General Peace Agreement.

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The Council reaffirmed the importance of proceeding expeditiously with the formation of the new Mozambican Defence Force (FADM). It encouraged the Government of Mozambique to quickly complete the transfer of the requisite authority and assets from the Mozambican Armed Forces (FAM) to the FADM. It called on Member States to provide military training and equipment to the FADM.

The Council expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing a detailed revised timetable for the phased withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). It agreed that the Operation should be deployed over a wider area of the country to help maintain security around the time of the elections. The Council noted that the post-election period would be a delicate time, during which Mozambique would need international help with rehabilitation and development. It called on the Secretary-General to report to the competent United Nations bodies on what further role the Organization could perform.

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Continuing his official visit to Pakistan, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today had meetings with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali. Those meetings focused on regional security issues. The Secretary-General was later scheduled to attend the inaugural ceremony of the Seventh Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference.

Among his appointments yesterday, the Secretary-General had a meeting with his Special Envoy for Tajikistan, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon. Mr. Piriz-Ballon informed him that the Tajik Government was taking a number of positive steps with regard to the peace process. Presidential elections and a referendum on a new constitution had been postponed until November to enable all political groups to take part, and an amnesty had been decreed for many of those imprisoned for political activities. In light of those developments, the Secretary-General instructed the Special Envoy to travel soon to Tehran, to meet with Tajik opposition leaders to obtain their agreement on a cease-fire accord and to press for a third round of talks.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed grave concern at the continuing hostilities and carnage in Afghanistan. After talks with representatives of a range of Afghan parties and independent personalities in Islamabad, he appealed for a moratorium on the shelling of civilian areas in Kabul and other parts of the country. He also called for the opening of roads to the Afghan capital to facilitate the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian supplies.

The Secretary-General urged all Afghan leaders to work for peace, and to cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan. The Organization was ready to help Afghanistan emerge from fratricidal conflict, and to curb unwarranted foreign interference in its internal affairs. He called on all countries to continue to support the United Nations in that

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regard, and appealed to donors not to forget the humanitarian dimension of the Afghan tragedy.

The Secretary-General also asked Special Envoy Sotirios Mousouris to convene a broad-based meeting in Afghanistan within a few weeks in the hope of breaking the deadlock in the peace process.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, has appointed Mr. William Clarence to head the human rights field operation in Rwanda. Mr. Clarence, who has worked as a senior representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), will take up his duties in Kigali immediately.

Mr. Clarence will direct and coordinate the work of human rights monitors and experts examining serious violations of human rights and international law in Rwanda. He will also coordinate the work of human rights staff dealing with advisory services and technical assistance programmes there. The United Nations is currently fielding 26 human rights monitors in the country. Up to 147 will be deployed in the coming weeks.

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The Secretary-General of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has said there is no reason why the Conference's goals -- reduction of infant and maternal mortality, and universal completion of primary education, especially for girls -- should not be achieved. Dr. Nafis Sadik told the Conference on Monday that it should adopt a universally acceptable and highly specific programme of action.

The programme of action was based on the principle of sovereignty, said Dr. Sadik, who is also Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Each country would decide for itself which recommendations were relevant to its conditions and needs, and how to interpret them. While the document addressed the issue of abortion, it did not advocate or promote abortion. On the contrary, the objective was to reduce the need for abortion.

The Minister for Health and Population of Algeria, Yahia Guidoum, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said success in the population field required action in the areas of education, health and protection of mothers and children. Population policies must be integrated in development efforts at all levels. The programme must enshrine the right to development without ambiguity, while bearing in mind the imperative of reducing poverty.

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